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Atari Online News, Etc.  
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~ Web Tax Ban Is Renewed ~ Most Want No-Spam List ~ Forget Passwords?

-\* i-Tunes For Windows Unveiled \*-  
-\* Time Warner Is An AOL Name-Dropper! \*-  
-\* Four More Critical Windows Flaws Are Found \*-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard  
"\*\*\*\*\*"

"Saying it like it is!"

Forgive me if I'm not in the greatest of moods this week. Although I'm been a New Englander for all of my life, I don't consider myself a Boston Red Sox fan (Game 7 is less than an hour away from starting as I write this). When I was younger - yes, I loved the Sox. These days, I like them as a fair weather fan, and when they're up against the Yankees! But that's not the source of my sadness. Like many baseball fans, I'm in a state of mourning. Alas, those hapless Chicago Cubs lose another chance at baseball's most holiest of grails! Forget about that fan who tried to catch a foul ball in the stands that may have been caught for an out! That's just another piece of baseball's ongoing urban legends to be used as an excuse as to why the Cubs fail to move on, again. This all reminds me of being an Atari user! We all know the failings of Atari. They coulda been a contender! They had it all, but just couldn't pull it off in the late innings. Even when they had their opponents down early, three games to one, they let the big prize slip away. The fans - with all of their unwavering support - couldn't help them make it. It happens. It will go down in history as just another one that got away. The fans will remain, but the players will change. And so it goes. Wait until next year...

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and again it's time to take a look at what's going on in the UseNet. It's kinda slim pickins this week, but there're still a few tidbits to feast upon.

If you've read this column more than once or twice, you know that one of my pet peeves is the low quality of personnel on local news programs these days. Well, they struck again.

Last night, after a freak storm, the 'reporter on the scene' pointed out a fallen tree which must have been a hundred years old at the minimum

and referred to it as "humongus".

Now, I use slang just about as often as anyone else, but there are times when it should be kept to a minimum and some standards need to be applied.

I just wish that someone would tell the television stations that when the government said "Hire the handicapped", they meant PHYSICALLY!!

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
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David Leaver posts a problem with his removable drive:

"At any time during a read or write to the FD10, disk operations can freeze. The TT has not crashed. Any program already running is accessible, but no disk operation is possible. The freeze will last a predictable amount of time, a few seconds less than two minutes, after which the read or write resumes as if nothing had happened. Nothing appears to be wrong with the completed read or write."

Dr. Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver, asks David:

"Did you switch the Fast ACSI option on? This does not work with some drives (also refer to the manual) and may result in the problems you have observed. Try to switch it off."

Besides note that the ACSI bus of many TTs is not working properly. But with these TTs you usually get a loss of data with fast drives connected to the ACSI bus. In your case it seems to be something different."

David tells Uwe:

"Uwe, thanks for the response. I should have mentioned that I have Fast ACSI switched off, but having it switched on makes no difference. (The FD-10 could not be considered fast - it uses a 10 mb 5.25" floppy medium.)

I had never experienced this behaviour before creating the FAT32 partitions on the Quantum. However, since I posted my message, I have tried booting with the Quantum switched off, and with the "#\_DPP -f2 -F32 -S2 J:" line deleted from MAGX.INF, and the FD-10 still freezes in the same way. There may be no connection with The Quantum."

Uwe replies:

"Whatever it is, it cannot be directly related to the partition type. On the level where the drive is accessed partition types are not relevant. If possible, try using a shorter cable."

David tells Uwe:

"Unfortunately the ASCII input cable is a fixture in the drive, but it's only about 50cm - it could not be much shorter."

Julian Wolfe asks about EtherNEC on his new C-Lab Falcon:

"Hoping someone can help me out here...I've recently purchased a C-Lab Falcon MKX to replace my Mega/STE as my main machine. I just moved all my software over, and am starting on the STinG/EtherNEC installation. After installing the EtherNEC, I've found that even though I can see the MAC address through STinG, the card will not communicate with anything...Doing a PING yields no yellow lights. I purchased the EtherNEC fully assembled with card from Lyndon Amsdon.

Here's my STinG setup:

Path - C:\STING

ENEC3.STX  
RESOLVE.STX  
TCP.STX  
UDP.STX

ROUTE.TAB:

192.168.254.8	0.0.0.0	EtherNet 0.0.0.0
0.0.0.0	0.0.0.0	EtherNet 192.168.254.254

Mind you, save for ENEC3.STX in place of ENEC.STX, this setup is identical to that on my Mega/STE, which works 100%

I tested this under MagiC 6.20 and plain TOS 4.0, and neither makes any difference.

The setup on my C-Lab Falcon MKX:  
MagiC 6.20, NVDI 5.03, 14MB RAM, ScreenBlaster II

The setup on my Mega/STE:  
MagiC 6.20, NVDI 5.03, 4MB RAM

This problem seems uncannily similar to the EtherNEC problems TT owners seem to be discussing here on C.S.A.S.

Note: This is one EtherNEC that I've been moving from machine to machine, so I know it works."

Wolfgang Hiestand tells Julian:

"I managed to get a setup EtherNEC/STinG running on my falcon under TOS as well as MAGIC.

While testing, I identified problems with certain network cards. The only stable setup for me was with a RealTek 8019 chip network card. What card are you using?"

Kenneth Medin adds:

"You might want to try ENEC.STX to check if it works better than ENEC3.STX

Also the physical order of .STX files in the STING folder is of some importance. On my system (TT with Magic)) ENEC.STX has to be the last .STX module."

Mark DUCKworth adds:

"Bear in mind I have never been able to get EtherneC working under STiNG using Thomas Redelberger's drivers. My solution was to use ozk's mintnet drivers at <http://assemsoft.atari.org> in combination with either MiNTNet under MiNT or Magxnet under MagiC. This of course poses a problem if you're a singletos/geneva/other system kind of guy. However from your post it would appear you are a MagiC guy. Magxnet is highly recommended by me, better internal latency, better throughput, even through the gluestik arbitration layer. It just doesn't have the pretty config utils. But I only had to place a few files in the right places and setup I think 3 lines of one file and 1 of another. Not complicated.

Alas, perhaps \*someone\* will be able to assist you with the STiNG setup. I dropped that stack. Of course the STiNG drivers might work better on a non-falcon machine, but that wasn't a consideration of mine - I have a falcon. Incredibly even after getting a CT60 everything still worked with minimal changes - a credit to ozk and Lyndon's design. However if you get a CT60 I would recommend an older version of ozk's driver which I can send."

Alexander Deuscher asks Mark:

"Are there problems with the current version of ozk's driver? I've just ordered an EtherNEC for my CT60, thus have not made any experience with this setup..."

Mark tells Alexander:

"No problems, just 0.0.14 or 0.1.14 or something .14, whatever I have is faster for evl and I. With the latest driver I pull maybe 350K/sec, with the 0.14 I pull 420+K/sec."

Julian tells everyone:

"I'm glad to say I've got the problems worked out, but it involved loading MiNT on my system, which I needed to do anyway.

Thanks for all your help, everyone!"

Raoul Teulings asks about using NEON on a Falcon030:

"Does anyone have experience with working on a Falcon with the programme NEON? I am thinking about using it on my Falcon but first one to know what has to be done before doing that. I know that you need a FPU. Is that still true or are there any nonFPU versions of NEON? And i've read something about that it is better not to have a coprocessor in the Falcon. Or am i mixing things up now and is it that you better not have a FPU installed and do require the

And if in the case that i need a FPU; where can i obtain one from?"

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"Neon needs a 68882 FPU and the Neon dongle on Falcon LAN port..
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If you had an stock falcon a cheap 68882/16 is enough.  
For an accelerated falcon you need a expensive 68882/32/..50  
Try to ask you local computer chip distributor."

"A 68881 works too. I used Neon with this one for some years, but now I have a 68882. Perhaps you want to have my 68881?"

"Just note: later versions of Neon don't require a dongle. I bought mine at Neuss show, and only got manuals with it, no dongle. There was TT version (u had to specify what computer u have) which i think still asks for dongle.

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

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## Study Finds Video Games Good for Treating Phobias

Scared silly of spiders? Horrified by heights? Terrorized by tight spaces? Play a video game - doctor's orders.

Regular, off-the-shelf computer video games are an effective method of treating people's fears, using a style of therapy that exposes people to what scares them in a controlled setting, according to a new study released on Friday.

The study, published in the October issue of the journal *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, was conducted at the Universite du Quebec en Outaouais in Quebec, Canada.

The researchers found that PC games that allow users to construct and change game environments, used with a headset that lets wearers simulate virtual reality, were just as effective at stimulating phobic responses as dedicated simulation machines that can cost four times as much.

People with phobias are often treated with exposure therapy, where they gradually spend more and more time in settings that scare them in an effort to reduce the fear response and get them to relax and get over their fright.

The researchers used the game "Half-Life" to create a spider-laden environment for arachnophobic people, and "Unreal Tournament" to simulate heights for acrophobics and tight spaces for claustrophobics.

A group of 13 people with phobias and 13 non-phobic people were tested using the games, a low-end PC and the head-mounted display. They were run through the simulations and then tested on a series of scales to measure their response.

"The results demonstrate that despite their low cost and flexibility, (PC simulators) can be phobogenic," the researchers said. "Moreover, virtual environments derived from games can produce the mid-range levels of anxiety that are most useful in therapy."

The researchers made the environments they used for their study available for download on the university's Web site. (<http://www.uqo.ca/cyberpsy/>)

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## AOL Time Warner to Drop 'AOL' From Name

As of Thursday, the world's largest media company will officially drop "AOL" from its name and be known as "Time Warner Inc.," as it was before it announced a merger with America Online at the height of the Internet boom in early 2000.

The company's shares will also resume trading under their former ticker symbol of "TWX" on the New York Stock Exchange on Thursday, instead of the current "AOL." The company will also change its Web site to [www.timewarner.com](http://www.timewarner.com) from [www.aoltimewarner.com](http://www.aoltimewarner.com).

The changes that go into effect Thursday were decided upon last month at a board meeting of AOL Time Warner. The company said the changes would end confusion between "AOL" the online service and "AOL" as shorthand for the entire company, whose vast media holdings include CNN, HBO, Time magazine and Warner Bros.

Veterans from the Time Warner side of the company have long pressed for AOL to be removed from the company name as disappointment over the merger mounted. Federal regulators are still investigating questionable accounting at the AOL division.

But the drive for a name change gained momentum after Jonathan Miller, head of the AOL division, made a personal appeal to chairman and CEO Richard Parsons that the change be made in order to help AOL regain control over its own brand.

The company previously announced that its new headquarters building in Manhattan's Columbus Circle will be renamed to Time Warner Center from the planned AOL Time Warner Center. Construction on the 80-story complex is nearly complete, and occupants will begin moving in phases beginning this fall.

## Apple Set to Unveil iTunes for Windows This Week

Coming soon to a Windows PC near you: Apple Computer Inc.'s popular iTunes online music store, which analysts say will join an already crowded market that could mute its chances of repeating the success of the Macintosh version.

The computer maker is set to unveil this week the long-promised Windows-compatible version of its online music service. Last week, it sent invitations to reporters for an event on Thursday in San Francisco proclaiming, "The year's biggest music story is about to get even bigger."

An Apple spokesman declined further comment.

Yet now, some analysts say that while iTunes for Windows may be just the thing for fans, it may be coming too late for the broader market. There are already similar services for Windows users, such as MusicMatch, already entrenched and another called BuyMusic.com. File-swapping service Napster has resurrected itself as a pay service, now under a parent company, Roxio Inc.

"They're going to have a serious problem with the Windows community," said



Rob Enderle, principal of market research firm the Enderle Group. "If they could have gone there first, they could have carved out a beachhead."

Apple unveiled the iTunes service for the 3 percent of the PC market that uses Macintosh computers in April. Incorporated into its popular and easy-to-use iTunes software for managing digitized songs, the interface is simple, and songs cost 99 cents each to download.

The service took off, and the Cupertino, California, company has sold more than 10 million songs in the five months since launching the service, which has more than 200,000 songs for sale.

"The service has done great on the Mac side," Enderle said.

But the iTunes Music Store strikes a familiar tune for Apple, analysts said. Apple was the first to popularize the graphical user interface, but was ultimately leapfrogged by Microsoft. It was ahead of the curve with the Newton handheld computer, but the handheld didn't take off until years later.

In the case of online music, other offerings that have come along have aped the Apple model, some dispensing with the subscription-based model in favor of Apple's a la carte model.

The Napster service goes live Oct. 29, selling more than 500,000 songs, what it calls the world's largest digital music library, at 99 cents each. And BuyMusic, in its television commercials, went so far as to borrow the style of Apple's own humorous ones, with actors singing along with their digital music players against a white backdrop.

A MusicMatch spokeswoman said it was unclear how the Windows version of Apple's online music store would affect its relationship with the Mac maker.

"We were partners (with Apple) but always expected we would one day be competitors once they launched the iTunes download service," a MusicMatch spokeswoman said. "MusicMatch jukebox will continue to support iPod, but it's up to Apple to decide if they'll ship IPOD with MusicMatch jukebox. It's totally in their hands at this point."

Other services include RealNetworks Inc.'s Rhapsody service. Dell Inc., AOL Time Warner Inc.'s America Online and Amazon.com Inc. are also considering whether to offer similar services.

When it unveiled the service, Apple said it was simple and cheap enough to compete with the free song-swap sites that the record industry blames for its two-year slump. And Apple was one of the few companies offering online music sales to ink licensing agreements with all five big record labels.

The service also helped fuel a strong rally in Apple's stock price, with shares soaring more than 70 percent since the service was introduced. And Apple said that in its June quarter, it had record sales of its iPod music players.

Apple Chief Financial Officer Fred Anderson has said that the Windows launch of iTunes would be a Trojan Horse for the company that many say popularized the personal computer, spurring more sales of the iPod players, which have also been popular with Windows users.

Dan Niles, an analyst at Lehman Brothers, estimated that Apple sold 303,000

iPod digital music players in the June quarter at an average price of \$365, up from 78,000 in the March quarter, fueled by the launch of the company's online music store.

But just how profitable is iTunes Music Store?

Apple said in its June quarter earnings conference call that the iTunes Music Store was close to break-even in its first quarter of operations.

Niles estimates that Apple keeps about 30 cents from each 99-cent song sold, before credit card transaction costs, which he said are high as a percentage of revenue, up to 4 percent.

### Mozilla Launches Version 1.5

The Mozilla Foundation on Wednesday is releasing the latest version of its open-source Web application suite.

The Mozilla 1.5 suite, available now, includes a Web browser, e-mail client, Web page design software and a chat client. With the release, Mozilla is improving its tabbed browsing so that tabs and bookmarks work better together, building a spell checker into the mail client and improving the layout tools in the Mozilla Composer Web editor.

Mozilla also announced the latest releases of its stand-alone Firebird browser (Version 0.7) and Thunderbird mail application (Version 0.3). Both are technology previews because they remain in pre-version 1.0 states and haven't undergone full testing, said Mitchell Baker, Mozilla Foundation president.

Along with the new releases, Mozilla is adding new end-user services in its quest to become more user-focused. It is offering Mozilla 1.5, Firebird and Thunderbird on a CD, in addition to software downloads, introducing end-user telephone support and launching a revamped mozilla.org Web site.

A new version of Opera runs across operating systems. Read the story.

Since becoming independent from America Online Inc.'s Netscape Communications subsidiary in July, Mozilla has heard from users wanting its software offered on a CD, Baker said. International users and those with low-bandwidth connections are likely targets.

"We want to remove any barriers for those who want Mozilla," Baker said.

The CDs are available for \$3.95. As previously reported, the telephone support is being offered through DecisionOne and costs \$39.95 per incident. Mozilla also is planning future e-mail support, Baker said.

The redesigned site, which will launch later this week, includes a section devoted to Mozilla product information targeted to end users, Baker said. In the past, much of the information on the Mozilla project's site was solely developer-focused.

### MSN Adds Antivirus, Firewall Tools

Saying that online safety is now its customers' primary concern, Microsoft will offer McAfee virus scan and firewall products to U.S. customers of its upcoming MSN Premium broadband Internet subscription service.

The software giant said Friday that it sealed a deal with intrusion prevention provider Network Associates to include the company's McAfee VirusScan and Personal Firewall Plus products with the MSN Premium service due out later this year.

America Online has also enlisted Network Associates to provide the McAfee products to its customers and Yahoo, which offers broadband service in the U.K. with British Telecommunications under the BT Yahoo Broadband brand, has said that it plans to add antivirus and free firewall products to its service.

The added security measures are particularly important for broadband users, Microsoft said, who have an always-on connection and are vulnerable to viruses, worms, and Trojan horses transmitted through file sharing, Web site downloads, and instant messaging.

McAfee's VirusScan product is automatic antivirus software that detects potential threats and prevents them from infecting users' computers, whereas the firewall product acts as a barrier between a user's PC and the Internet.

U.S. customers of the upcoming MSN Premium service will receive both McAfee products as part of their subscription, Microsoft said. The company did not say whether the expanded security features would eventually be available to subscribers outside the U.S.

The move to bolster broadband customers' online security comes amid wider promises by the software maker to shore up its security efforts and on the heels of a wave of damaging worm and virus attacks that have heightened consumers' awareness of the threats.

"This collaboration between Microsoft and McAfee is welcome news because our research shows that home broadband connections are most susceptible to attacks," said DK Matai, chief executive of U.K. security company mi2g.

Matai said that most companies have antivirus tools in place but home users aren't as savvy at protecting their PCs. However, no matter how much money is put into bundling antivirus products with broadband services, the biggest problem is getting home users to download security patches to protect against potential threats, Matai said.

The "MSBlast" worm that circulated recently infected hundreds of thousands of machines even though a patch was available, he said.

Matai suggested incorporating an automatic patch download program for home users. For now, however, antivirus, and personal firewall products are a step in the right direction, he said.

#### Microsoft Warns of Four New Windows Flaws

Microsoft Corp. warned consumers Wednesday about four critical new flaws in its popular Windows software as the company shifted to monthly alerts for

serious problems that could let hackers break into computers.

In particularly embarrassing disclosures, Microsoft acknowledged problems in its technology to authenticate software publishers over the Web and in its Windows help and support system. Microsoft also announced a fifth, less serious Windows vulnerability.

The company said it did not believe hackers were yet exploiting any of the vulnerabilities it announced.

Microsoft said last week it will begin issuing monthly warnings and software patches, responding to frustration from technology managers who must apply sporadic patches each week across hundreds of computers inside corporations.

The company said it expects to release future warnings on the second Tuesday or Wednesday of each month. It has promised to rush out an emergency patch midmonth if it determines hackers are actively breaking into computers using a flaw it can repair immediately.

Separately, Microsoft began offering Windows XP users a single, convenient patch that combines 22 previous updates. It was aimed at customers who haven't diligently applied every software patch or who recently bought a new computer or recently installed Windows from scratch.

All four of the most dangerous new vulnerabilities affect versions of Windows 2000, which is commonly used by corporations and government agencies. Three of them also affect other Windows versions, including Microsoft's flagship Windows XP software, popular among home users, and Windows Server 2003 for businesses.

#### Lawmakers Hammer on Spam

"What are we going to do about spam?"

It was a deceptively simple question posed by CNN's Lou Dobbs to a panel of software company chief executives here discussing policy with top government officials.

As expected, the CEOs denounced unsolicited commercial e-mail and some used the opportunity to talk up their company's antispam products.

Digital credentials are one antidote to the growing problem, suggested Bill Conner, CEO of Entrust. "At some point, you won't accept noncredentialed e-mails," he said.

Borland Software's CEO Dale Fuller suggested erecting economic barriers. "If you're going to put out a piece of junk, we're going to charge you."

George Samunek, Network Associates' CEO, believes some kind of penalty should apply to spammers.

Squashing spam has no easy single answer. After all, Congress has tried to pass antispam legislation since 1995.

Yet, no fewer than six antispam bills are still pending on Capitol Hill, several of them making slow but steady progress.

"The problem with most of these bills, however well intentioned, is they provide a big fig leaf of legitimacy for spam," says Andrew Barrett, executive director of the Spamcon Foundation, a watchdog group. "Frankly, they protect the status quo, and the language in the bill tends to frame spam as fraud."

Two Senate antispam bills have cleared committee, but some say their progress is stalled by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-New York). He wants to attach a national do-not-spam registry to the final bills.

Critics of Schumer's proposal cite implementation barriers, including the high costs related to maintaining such a list. Ari Schwartz, associate director of the Center for Democracy and Technology, calls the costs prohibitive. "And we don't even know where these spammers are coming from," he adds.

The Federal Trade Commission also questions a list's feasibility. "A do-not-spam list is an intriguing idea, but it is unclear how we can make it work," FTC Chairman Tim Muris said in an August speech. Most spam is already so clearly illegitimate that the senders are no more likely to comply than with the...laws they now ignore."

While acknowledging the hurdles, Spamcon's Barrett likes the Schumer bill and the idea of a national no-spam registry. He says his bill supports domain-wide opt-out. For instance, AOL or Yahoo could opt out entirely, so all users of their e-mail services would receive no spam.

The CAN-SPAM Act and the Criminal Spam Act are the two bills that have passed committee and are destined for the Senate floor. Under the CAN-SPAM Act, federal prosecutors and ISPs can sue spammers who use misleading e-mail subject lines, do not let recipients unsubscribe, or send e-mail using dictionary attacks (a spammer practice that randomly generates e-mail addresses for a domain).

The Criminal Spam Act also subjects senders of e-mail with misleading headers to civil and criminal penalties, including up to five years in federal prison and fines as high as \$25,000 each day.

In the House, progress is slowed by two competing bills, the Wilson-Green bill and the Tauzin bill. Both bills require users to opt out to avoid getting unwanted e-mail. Rep. Heather Wilson (R-New Mexico) proposes enlisting state attorneys general to enforce her antispam law, which Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-Louisiana) opposes. Wilson's bill also prohibits affiliates or subsidiaries of companies from spamming users who have opted out once.

Calling the Tauzin bill a "train wreck," Spamcon's Barrett says the measure "gives a veneer of legitimacy to spam." The RID-SPAM Act bans deceptive messages, prohibits harvesting e-mail addresses, and lets ISPs (but not individuals) sue spammers for damages. But Barrett says network administrators and consumer groups call this plan the "Spammer Bill of Rights."

He considers the Wilson bill little better. The principal problem is that all the bills put the onus on users to opt out, giving spammers free rein until then, Barrett says.

If every one of America's 23 million small businesses sent you an e-mail just once each year, you would have to opt out of 640 e-mail messages every

day, he notes.

Also, the bills are problematic because they define spam as fraud, Barrett adds. To him, the message is, "as long as you tell the truth, you may spam away to your heart's content. But most these legislations make no distinction between content and consent."

It's unclear whether differences can be resolved in time to pass an antispam bill this year. A Wilson spokesperson says dialogue with Tauzin's office continues, but won't put a time frame on the resolution.

"There is no one piece of legislation that will solve the problem overnight," Schwartz says. Identifying spammers is complicated, especially when it involves overseas senders, he notes. Stopping spam completely is too ambitious, he says. "If technology and legislation can turn the tide, then we've made some progress," Schwartz says.

Every e-mail has a price tag. The mass volume of e-mail created by spam increases the cost to the ISP, which passes it along to its customers in fees. In contrast, with traditional direct mail, the sender pays for the cost of sending the mail. According to the FTC, spam costs between \$10 billion and \$87 billion yearly.

Besides costing businesses big bucks, spam is changing the way Americans use the Internet.

"Some people are diminishing their use of e-mail because of spam," says Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Internet and American Life Project. His organization is releasing a report on spam and its effects on people's behavior this week, Rainie says.

#### Survey: Internet Users Want No-Spam List

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) today renewed his offensive against junk e-mail, citing a new survey that says 75 percent of the nation's Internet users want a national "do-not-spam" list similar to the anti-telemarketing registry launched by the Federal Trade Commission this month.

More than two-thirds of Internet users would sign up for the list, according to the online survey of 1,500 Internet users conducted by Stamford, Conn.-based research firm Insight Express and Chicago consulting firm UnSpam.

The survey also found that Internet users remain unimpressed with efforts to control spam. Less than half of those surveyed said spam filters are effective, and 40 percent of the respondents said that large Internet service providers are not doing enough to fight spam.

"Spam is not just a little nuisance, it's an epidemic, and getting rid of it for good is not as simple as just hitting the delete button once or twice," said Schumer at a press conference on Capitol Hill today to unveil the survey.

Internet users increasingly are buckling under a tremendous wave of spam inundating their in-boxes. Some estimates say that spam accounts for about half of the e-mail that people receive daily. The Insight Express survey found that one in four e-mails people receive at home are pornographic in

nature.

Support for an anti-spam list swelled after the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) unveiled its do-not-call registry earlier this year. That list now has 52 million phone numbers, and went live at the beginning of this month despite several court challenges.

Schumer introduced a bill in June that would create a national do-not-spam list. It also would fine spammers up to \$100,000 a day and require e-mail marketers to put valid return addresses on their e-mails so consumers can request to be taken off their lists.

"We've got parental advisory notices on music and ratings for TV shows and movies to ensure that parents have the ability to keep their children from being exposed to inappropriate materials," he said. "So it's baffling that there's no safeguard in place to ensure that parents can protect their kids from vulgar e-mail."

Schumer plans to try to attach his proposal to an anti-spam bill sponsored by Sens. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.). That bill, which carries the direct marketing industry's support, appears to have a better chance of passing.

Enforcing a do-not-spam list would be too difficult because it's easier for spammers to hide their identity, said FTC staff attorney Brian Huseman.

"With a do-not-call list we can assure consumers that telemarketing calls will decrease," Huseman said. "We cannot make those same assurances about a do-not-spam list."

John Mozena, a spokesman for the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail (CAUCE), said that Schumer's bill is the only one that "would actually make a difference against spam."

Direct Marketing Association spokesman Louis Mastria said a do-not-spam list would be "ineffective and impotent."

"It sounds like the silver bullet," Mastria said. "The reality is... you're assuming that spammers are all of a sudden going to get religion about a law. It hasn't happened to date. It won't happen in the future."

Schumer's bill is an alternative to several other bills in the House and Senate that try to limit spam but contain several provisions that protect direct marketers' efforts to continue using the Internet as a prime selling opportunity.

The DMA and other advertising organizations were able to get a provision inserted into a House anti-spam bill that would exempt them from legal penalties if they join a business coalition that promises to develop an online marketing code of conduct.

Such a conduct code was released yesterday by the DMA, the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers.

The groups said that they have nine guidelines - including real return addresses on e-mails and a promise to remove uninterested e-mail users from their marketing lists - that will promote legitimate direct marketing on the Internet.

## Spam Slayer: Hot Tips to Cool off Spam

Spam has been a nuisance for years, but only recently has it reached epidemic proportions. Not only does spam carry dangerous computer viruses, but its sheer volume drains bandwidth and productivity.

Daily spam e-mail messages are forecast to hit nearly 9 billion by 2004, up from more than 7 billion this year. About half of all e-mail is spam, according to antispam software maker Brightmail.

Just ignoring spam is no solution. Just deleting spam isn't good enough anymore, either. So we're going to have to deal with it: It's time for spam slayers to unite.

**Fix Broken Windows** Microsoft's operating system has been criticized for having more holes than a slice of Swiss cheese. Many viruses, bugs, and worms have gained access to systems as spam. It's time to start checking IDs. Activate the Windows Update feature inside your Internet Explorer Web browser (under the Tools menu). This automatically checks for patches and upgrades to Windows XP, Me, and 98. This is a good dose of preventive medicine to head off disaster.

### Top Tips

Here are seven more tips for protecting your e-mail address and preventing it from being abused by the spamming hordes.

**What's in a name?** A favorite spammers' technique is running a software dictionary program to generate millions of e-mail addresses - some of them will actually work. So, if your name is John Doe and your e-mail address is `jdoe@domain-name.com`, you're basically asking for spam. Try using a variant of your name that you and your friends can easily remember, but hard for an automated spamware program to guess. Mr. Doe might want to try `jdoe432lgo@domain-name.com` instead.

**Handle with care** Would you scrawl your name and phone number on a telephone booth in Times Square soliciting personal advice? No, you wouldn't. So don't do the virtual equivalent by posting your private e-mail address on the Internet. Spammers use software versions of henchmen to scour the Net and harvest e-mail addresses listed on Usenet groups, chat rooms, and Web sites.

To solve the problem, try this: Most ISPs give you multiple e-mail addresses for one account. Create a disposable e-mail address for public postings and to give to used-car salespersons. Give your private e-mail only to friends and family.

**Creature of Habit** If you can't change your e-mail address, you have only one option: A spam filter. Personal tastes may influence which type you prefer. Here are two free programs that can learn, adapt, and predict what you consider spam.

SpamBayes works with Outlook, and, as you delete e-mail, it will learn what you like and don't like. Similarly POPFile is free and compatible with Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, and the Pegasus e-mail program.

PCWorld.com also maintains an extensive library of spam blockers and



filters in our Downloads section.

**Opting to Opt Out** Beware of spam that offers an "opt-out" option supposedly to stop spamming you. Many spam messages invite you to click on a link or respond to the message, leading you to believe you have just unsubscribed from receiving more spam. Disreputable junk e-mailers love this trick because it confirms your e-mail address is valid. You may never see e-mail from the original spammer, but you're guaranteed to get more e-crud from a dozen more dirtbags.

The tip for this spam reality is: It's okay to opt out, so long as you can trust the recipient.

**Spamware Proliferates** Nobody reads the 12-page end-user agreements for software they install. That's too bad, because you may inadvertently be inviting malicious code that can turn your PC into a spam-sending machine. The programs you get from less than reputable sources may do disreputable things to your machine.

**Go Ahead, Blame Yourself** Speaking of paying attention to the small print, consider the true cost the next time you sign up for a free Web service. "Free" sometimes has the hidden tradeoff of getting spammed. Services often pay for themselves by selling your e-mail address to marketers that in turn send marketing pitches.

For example, the Web site IMBum.com gives away free instant messaging icons for users of AOL AIM software. The price? You must accept e-mail marketing pitches from IMBum.com partners. Worse: In order for you to register, IMBum.com insists you "invite" a friend via e-mail to sign up.

**Slay Spammers Yourself** If it looks, sounds, and smells like spam, then slay it yourself. You can report particularly vile spam to your Internet service provider. Typically ISPs maintain abuse inboxes that follow the convention abuse@isp.com or postmaster@isp.com.

If you're really ticked off by a spam, file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission and forward the spam to UCE@FTC.gov.

## States Renew Case Against Internet Tax Ban

With a moratorium on taxing consumer access to the Internet set to expire next month, Congress is under pressure to decide whether states should be barred from taxing a raft of budding online services - from Internet-based phone calls to online music and movie downloads.

State lawmakers and tax officials are mounting a last-minute lobbying push to convince Congress to allow them to collect taxes on those services, which are expected to become some of the most lucrative businesses on the Internet.

Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), who is sponsoring a Senate bill to renew the tax ban, said the state lobbying campaign is "alarming."

"It seems to me what the states really want is to stop the Internet access ban from becoming permanent, or they are looking for language that would stick consumers with hundreds of millions of dollars in new taxes each year," Wyden said today on the Senate floor.

The Senate is expected to vote on the bill by the end of the month. The House of Representatives passed its version in late September.

The five-year-old "Internet tax moratorium" bans state and local governments from taxing high-speed digital subscriber lines (DSL), cable, satellite and dial-up services that Americans use to connect to the Internet.

It does not forbid states from collecting taxes on other online activities, but local and state officials worry that telecommunications companies will start "bundling" those services with their Internet access, making them untaxable.

"What we're trying to do is make sure that as broadband becomes the garden variety of access to the Internet that we protect ourselves from that bundling," said Harley Duncan, executive director of the Federation of Tax Administrators. "The way the bill is written now, a whole bunch of proprietary information services would be exempt from taxation."

A September study by the Multistate Tax Commission said that extending the moratorium would reduce state and local revenue bases by as much as \$8.75 billion annually by 2006 if telecom companies are allowed to bundle their services.

States and localities have been able to tax voice communications for many years, a precedent that led Maryland, Virginia and 13 other states to pass laws to tax Internet access when it is bundled with voice services. Six other states are poised to adopt similar legislation.

Three states - Alabama, Florida and Kentucky - charge sales taxes on DSL service because it is considered a telecommunications service.

Under the bills to renew the access tax ban, the 10 states that taxed Internet access before the ban became law no longer would be able to do so.

The court system already is weighing in. Last week, a federal judge in Minnesota struck down a decision by state regulators to force companies offering Internet phone service to obey traditional telephone regulations. The decision means that companies offering Internet-based phone calls don't have to collect the same taxes that regular telephone companies have to collect.

The access tax ban is unrelated to a state effort to get congressional approval to force retailers to collect sales taxes on Internet purchases.

#### Supreme Court to Revisit Online Porn Law

The Supreme Court agreed Tuesday to step into a fight over how the government can protect children from online smut without resorting to unconstitutional censorship.

Thorny issues raised by Internet regulations have returned over and over to the justices since 1997, when the court struck down Congress' first comprehensive attempt to punish people who make it too easy for children to find racy material online.

The latest case asks whether a subsequent law, twice rejected by an appeals court, restricts too much material that adults have the right to see or buy. On a more practical level, the court will decide whether the government can require some form of an adults-only screening system to ensure child computer users cannot see material deemed harmful to them.

"The Internet is the wild, wild West. It's anything goes, and anything goes because it has no discernible boundaries and you never know who's at the other side of the mouse," said Douglas Kmiec, a law professor at Pepperdine University.

Justices have an opportunity, Kmiec said, to decide "whether a legal fence can be constructed in this otherwise wild and untamed terrain."

Congress passed the Child Online Protection Act in 1998 to crack down on Internet sites that do not block pornography and other inappropriate material from children. It calls for six months in jail and \$50,000 in fines for first-time violators and additional fines for repeat offenders. It is on hold pending court challenges.

The American Civil Liberties Union, representing booksellers, artists, explicit Web sites and others, challenged the law as an unconstitutional damper on free speech.

The law could make criminals of many people who use the Internet for legitimate reasons, the challengers argue. For example, those who operate Web sites about gynecology and safe sex could be criminals under the law, as could Mitch Tepper, who posts explicit how-to sexual advice for disabled people, the ACLU claimed.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has twice struck down the law, most recently and conclusively in March with a ruling that the law is riddled with problems that make it "constitutionally infirm."

The Bush administration appealed to the high court, arguing children are "unprotected from the harmful effects of the enormous amount of pornography on the World Wide Web." The Child Online Protection Act is a reasonable solution, Solicitor General Theodore Olson told the court.

Olson said the main target is commercial pornographers who use sexually explicit "teasers" to lure customers.

The free teasers are available to nearly anyone surfing the Internet, and sometimes appear even when computer users are not seeking out pornography. They typically lead potential customers to a Web site that may require payment and age verification.

Critics are concerned that if the law is upheld, online newspapers, chat rooms and other sites that offer adult but constitutionally protected speech could be forced to restrict access.

The law, signed by former President Clinton and endorsed by President Bush, was written to replace a 1996 statute, the Communications Decency Act, that the Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional on free-speech grounds in 1997.

The Bush administration hopes to build on success in a similar case earlier this year. The Supreme Court upheld an Internet anti-pornography law against free speech challenges, ruling that the federal government can withhold money from libraries that won't install Internet blocking devices.

The Child Online Protection Act does not affect foreign pornographic Web sites, so its reach is limited.

"If the law is upheld, maybe it will help parents a little bit - but only a little bit," said Eugene Volokh, a visiting law professor at Harvard.

The case is *Ashcroft v. ACLU*, 03-218.

#### AOL Plans No-Frills Service

Trying to fend off cut-rate competitors, America Online plans to introduce a discount version of its dial-up Internet access service early next year that will carry the Netscape brand name, a person with the company said Tuesday.

The new service is expected to cost \$9.95 per month for unlimited access, a big break on the \$23.90 monthly tag that comes with AOL's current dial-up service, which has seen its subscriber numbers fall. The new plan would also beat the \$14.95-per-month package AOL is pushing to people who get their Internet access from a separate broadband provider.

However, executives at Dulles, Va.-based AOL, part of AOL Time Warner Inc., don't believe the new Netscape discount service will siphon away bigger-spending customers after it debuts nationwide in the first quarter of 2004.

The plan is instead targeted at people who want only bare-bones Internet access and are considered unlikely to spend more on higher-end packages, according to the AOL source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

For example, the slimmed-down service will not offer the parental controls or exclusive content found on AOL's main service. And while AOL now lets subscribers have up to seven different e-mail accounts, the Netscape package will carry only one screen name and e-mail address.

The plan was first reported Tuesday in *The Wall Street Journal*.

The discount plan amounts to the latest acknowledgment that AOL needs to do more to keep its 25.3 million Internet access customers from fleeing - after losing 1.1 million worldwide in the first half of this year.

Internet users are being enticed at both ends of the price scale, not only by cheaper dial-up services like those offered by United Online Inc. and Earthlink Inc., but also to much faster DSL and cable-modem services that in some cases have fallen below \$30 a month because of competition.

Mark Goldston, the head of United Online, whose low-cost Juno, NetZero and Bluelight dial-up services have 2.6 million paid subscribers, called AOL's discount plan a "desperation move." Goldston predicted that it will ultimately widen the market for inexpensive Internet access and subvert the flagship AOL package just as discount airlines have made life miserable for premium carriers.

"I think this is a rather dark flag for AOL's business," he said.

By using the Netscape name for the new service, AOL will be reviving a

brand associated with the Internet explosion of the 1990s, when Netscape's Navigator browser introduced millions to the burgeoning World Wide Web.

AOL bought Netscape for \$10 billion in 1999, as Microsoft Corp.'s rival Internet Explorer was surging past Netscape to become the dominant browser. AOL sued Microsoft for allegedly using anticompetitive practices to achieve that dominance; Microsoft settled with AOL Time Warner for \$750 million this year.

#### Forgot Your Computer Password Again? Press Here

Attention confounded consumers: there's a high-tech solution that could render obsolete your growing jumble of credit card pin numbers and computer passwords - and it's as plain as the nose on your face or fingerprint.

The concept is based on biometrics - a branch of technology that identifies individuals based on biological traits - and has begun to take off in a security-conscious world where credit card fraud and identity theft runs rife.

Imagine a quick scan of your iris, fingerprint or entire face to authorize a credit card transaction, speed your way through customs at the airport or log you onto your computer.

A host of firms including Minnesota-based Identix Inc. and Paris-based Schlumberger Smart Cards and Terminals built businesses on military and government contracts. But with costs of raw material, computer chips and scanners plummeting, the technology is moving to the high street.

"What will make biometrics practical is the price of the chip," said Derek McDermott, managing director of UK-based ISL Biometrics. He said chip unit costs in the past year have fallen from 40 pounds (\$66.79) to four pounds.

The drop in price is expected to attract the interest of cost-conscious consumers and businesses, building the biometrics market into a \$4.0 billion segment by 2007, up from \$900 million in 2002, according to recent industry studies.

ISL Biometrics has installed fingerprint-recognition technology at over 60 British hospitals, McDermott said.

Some 11,000 National Health Service employees must press their finger to a tiny finger pad on a computer before gaining access to patient information or physical access to the prescription drugs ward, he added.

McDermott said privately held company ISL Biometrics has begun working with large banks and retailers interested in an extra layer of security for the growing number of transactions that take place on the Internet and other data networks.

Currently, most credit card purchases require just a simple password to authorize a transaction, making it increasingly easy for tech-savvy fraudsters to hijack consumers' details and embark on a spending spree that costs banks and retailers billions of dollars annually.

Another area biometrics firms are keen to exploit is the corporate sector.

According to a recent study by Aberdeen Group, large organizations spend as much as \$350 per employee annually on computer password management as employees invariably ring the IT "help" crew asking them to reset one of the myriad password codes needed to access the corporate computer network.

Cheap new devices such as mouse pads and laptop cards that come equipped with a tiny fingerprint-matching scanner are being designed to whisk desk drones onto the network.

And, in the near future, most mobile phones and handheld gadgets will be fitted with the same feature, experts say.

"All you'll need is your fingerprint imprint and you'll be on the system in no time," said McDermott.

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